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Message Text

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14
ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SY-10 USSS-00 OPR-02 SS-20

NSC-10 INR-10 PM-07 SCS-03 SCA-01 PER-05 FS-01 EB-11

CCO-00 DRC-01 AF-10 RSC-01 /130 W
---------- 010941
P R 181337Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4902
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY
CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 12101

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: AMER, PFOR, LE, UK
SUBJECT: UK INQUIRY ON E AND E PLANNING FOR LEBANON
REF: STATE 205068

1. INFORMATION IN REFTEL APPARENTLY SOMEWHAT GARBLED. BRITISH HAVE BEEN AND REMAIN WELL AWARE THAT (A) USG NOT PLANNING EVACUATE AMERICANS FROM LEBANON AT THIS TIME AND (B) AIR EVACUATION PREFERRED OVER SEA. IN FACT FCO DESK OFFICER WHO HANDLES LEBANON CONFIRMED THIS UNDERSTANDING OCTOBER 17 AND EXPLAINED THAT BRITISH INQUIRY WAS SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT LAST-DITCH CONTINGENCY IF AIR EVACUATION IMPOSSIBLE AND BRITISH NAVAL AND MERCHANT VESSELS IN MEDITERRANEAN WERE TOO FAR TO REACH LEBANON IN TIME. HE READ US PARAGRAPH IN OUTGOING CABLE OF INSTRUCTIONS TO WASHINGTON WHICH CAST INQUIRY IN THOSE TERMS.
2. FCO OFFICER TOLD US INQUIRY ORIGINATED WITH BRITISH EMBASSY IN BEIRUT, WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS IS AWARE THAT BRITISH CITIZENS NOT LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED QUITE AS RAPIDLY AS AMERICANS IF LOCAL SITUATION WORSENS.
3. REFERENCE BY BRITISH EMBOFF IN WASHINGTON WAS TO
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INFORMAL WORKING-LEVEL MEETING WITH CONSULAR SECTION OF

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FCO ON OCTOBER 15 WHICH WE ARRANGED PRIMARILY FOR BENEFIT OF CINCUSNAVEUR STAFF OFFICER SEEKING TO UPDATE THAT COMMAND ON POSSIBLE ROLE IF CONTINGENCY WERE TO ARISE, AND ON ANY EXISTING US AGREEMENTS WITH BRITISH. MEETING REVIEWED (INDICATIVELY RATHER THAN AUTHORITATIVELY) SITUATION IN EVERY ME COUNTRY AND PARAMETERS OF US-UK (STOLTZFUS-TREADWELL) 1971 AGREEMENT AFFECTING SELECTED AREAS OF GULF AND SAUDI ARABIA.

4. US OFFICIALS PRESENT EMPHASIZED THROUGHOUT THAT IN ALMOST EVERY AREA (BAHRAIN BEING ONLY PROBABLE EXCEPTION) US PREFERENCE, LIKE THAT OF BRITISH, IS FOR CIVILIAN AIR EVACUATION AS FIRST STEP. THIS POINT WAS SPECIFICALLY MADE IN LEBANON'S CASE TOO -- DESPITE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES WE ARE EXPERIENCING IN EGYPT.

5. RE PARA 3 REFTEL, FCO OFFICER ASSURED US BRITISH FORESEE NO PROBLEM OBTAINING COMMERCIAL AIR CHARTER AIRCRAFT (FROM STATE-OWNED COMPANY IF NECESSARY) BUT ARE THINKING OF CONTINGENCY WHEN AIRPORT NOT AVAILABLE.

6. ON BASIS REPORT FROM WASHINGTON RECEIVED LATE OCTOBER 17, FCO IS SATISFIED THAT USG AWARE OF BRITISH INTEREST WHILE UNDERSTANDING WE UNABLE GIVE ANY FIRM COMMITMENTS. FCO WILL PASS INFO TO BEIRUT IN TERMS OF US AND UK REMAINING IN CLOSE TOUCH SO THAT ONE MIGHT ASSIST THE OTHER DEPENDING ON WHOSE SHIPS AVAILABLE AND WHOSE CITIZENS REQUIRE EVACUATION AT ANY SPECIFIC TIME.

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